



State of Tennessee

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New Report Examines Effectiveness of Extended School Hours on Learning

Many schools across Tennessee are increasing their classroom hours, but it's difficult to measure what effect that's having on student achievement, a new report from the Comptroller's Offices of Research and Education Accountability (OREA) indicates.

The report, which was released today, examines common practices, funding and effectiveness of extended learning time and profiles Tennessee schools that are using it.

Extending the length of the school day or increasing the number of school days are strategies low-performing schools sometimes use in an effort to boost student achievement. That may increase students' time in school anywhere from 90 to 300 additional hours per year.

OREA's report found that 79 traditional schools in 38 districts in Tennessee were using some level of extended learning time in 2012-13 school year. In addition to the traditional schools, 49 charter schools - which typically offer extended learning time as part of their education models - were operating in Tennessee that year. This year, 15 more traditional schools and numerous charter schools have implemented extended learning time.

Because extended school hours are often implemented in conjunction with other education reforms such as improving the quality of instruction, using existing time effectively and developing data to pinpoint student needs, the effect of extended learning time on student achievement is difficult to isolate. Researchers have yet to establish a strong link between extended hours and student achievement.

Research has indicated, however, that academic benefits are most likely to come from additional time that is structured and focused with students fully engaged in learning. Disadvantaged students are most likely to benefit.

Many schools currently implementing extended learning time are doing so through the use of federal school improvement grants. These grants – intended to help the lowest performing school improve academic achievement – require numerous reforms, including extended school schedules.

OREA is an agency within the Comptroller's Office that is charged with providing accurate and objective policy research and analysis for the Tennessee General Assembly and the public.

To view the report online, go to: <http://www.comptroller.tn.gov/OREA/>

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